

## Sermon for 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Epiphany – Jane Brough

In the wedding car on the way to the reception, Julie and Richard chatted excitedly about their marriage service “I was so nervous” Julie admitted. “I was trembling like a leaf”. Richard grinned and squeezed her hand “me too” he said. “But did you see the vicar shaking?” he went on “She couldn’t have been nervous could she? I mean, vicars do weddings all the time!”

Richard was both right and wrong. Church ministers do conduct lots of ceremonies. But that doesn’t mean they don’t get nervous. Weddings are very special days, for all concerned. For the couple, their parents, the guests, but special too, for the vicar! part of the job, but also a privilege and a pleasure, and yes, many do get nervous. I’ve witnessed many newly ordained clergy shaking in their boots at their first wedding.

Weddings occur frequently in the Bible as images to describe something wonderful. Jesus mentioned wedding feasts in some of his parables. In those days, even more than our own, everyone had been to a wedding. Something wonderful but also a fact of everyday life. An absolute gift for any storyteller needing a vivid metaphor. Like the Bible writers, Jesus was a master storyteller, but he not only told stories to illustrate God’s loves for us. He lived the story – in his life on earth and his death for us. Like Old Testament prophets, he knew actions speak louder than words. So it isn’t surprising that Jesus first chose to “reveal his glory” not by anything he said, but by something he did.

The wedding gave an extra dimension to the miracle. At this everyday but wonderful event, he took something ordinary like water and changed it into something special – the very best wine. Gallons of it! The water jars were intended for Jewish purification rites. By using those Jesus perhaps shows that here is something better than the Jewish Law. Here is the creator, the one who made the water, present among us. But whatever the containers, the water was water, a feature of everyday life.

With Jesus, the ordinary can become wonderful. In a service of Holy Communion we receive bread and in normal times wine. Food and drink are features of our everyday lives, but this food is special, this drink is special. Because in them the saving presence of Jesus is made known to us. With Jesus, the everyday can become special. Not only in the Eucharist, not only in church. Jesus transforms the water of our daily lives into the sparkling new wine of his presence. If we allow him to do so.

What if the servants at that wedding had ignored his bizarre instructions? What if they hadn’t filled the jars with water? What if they’d winked at one another and said, “We’ve got a right one here!”

Marys faith saved the day, she pointed out the problem to Jesus.” They have no wine.” She believed that Jesus could do something about it, and she trusted that he would do something. When she said to the servants “Do whatever he tells you.” her conviction rubbed off on them.

Mary’s words still speak to us, over two thousand years later. But what is Jesus telling us today? What must we do? How can we find out?

By studying the Bible we learn more about what Jesus wants all of us to do. To love God more dearly and love our neighbour as ourselves, even love our enemies. Turn the other cheek. Go the extra mile. Tell others of Gods love.

And by acknowledging his presence in our everyday lives, we can listen to what Jesus is saying to each of us individually. We are all different, thank God! We have different home situations, different jobs, different strengths and weaknesses, different gifts to use in God's service.

Whoever we are, whatever we are, Jesus is with us as we go about our everyday tasks. He will have a word for each of us, just for us – something he wants us as individuals to do for him. Something which in turn, will enable him to work his miracle in our lives to turn everyday lives into life, in abundance a closer relationship with God. If we listen.

Weddings are wonderful. But they happen to someone everyday. So if God can speak to us in the story of a wedding surely we can listen to our Creator in the things that happen to us day by day? And if Jesus can be present among us in bread and wine, can we not look for our saviour in other "ordinary" things?

Amen